

Bush River Community Council

August 20, 2012 Meeting Minutes

The August 2012 meeting of the Bush River Community Council (BRCC) was called to order by the Chairman, Larry Carmichael, at 6:32 p.m. in the Anita C. Light Estuary Center large meeting room, Otter Point Road, Abingdon, MD, on August 20, 2012. Maryland State Senator Nancy Jacobs attended. Capt. Christopher Swain from Harford County Sheriff's Office, Arden McClune and Paul Magness from the county Parks and Recreation Department, Janet Gleisner from the county Planning and Zoning Department and Steven Overbay, DoD BRAC Coordinator, were in attendance. Bush River Community Council Board members: Chairman Larry Carmichael, Vice Chairman Randy Conlon, Recording Secretary Mary Starks, Kathleen Leary, and Jo Wanda Lucas were present. Board members John Paff, Glenn Dudderar, and Harry Webster, Jr. were absent from the meeting. Six members of the Bush River community attended. Andrew Tess, represented the Harford County Council.

Chairman Carmichael called the meeting to order at 6:34 pm. He welcomed everyone and thanked them for coming. The final Minutes from the July meeting were approved by the Board electronically.

Harford County Sheriff's Report

Captain Swain discussed the increase in burglaries throughout the county. There was an arrest made in one on Washington Avenue on Long Bar Harbor and several reports of attempted burglaries on Cedar Day Lane, Glenville and Robin Hood Road areas. Primarily these were attempted break-ins of sheds and back doors. A pizza delivery man was robbed in Riverside. Captain Swain encouraged all citizens to call 911 if any suspicious behavior is observed. A question was raised about the food pantry on Perryman Road. Apparently there have been sporadic break-ins there where individuals spend time in the facility. A local resident was told they could certainly put the cameras back up since the illegal activity stops temporarily when the cameras are working. He said to be sure to call 911 if any action was detected by the cameras. In response to a concern about speeding on Declaration Circle and Church Creek Road in Riverside, Captain Swain was asked for assistance for calming devices or radar on these streets since the county refuses to install speed bumps – The problem will be worse with school starting soon. Also, the concern was raised that there is now only one crossing guard on Church Creek Road near the Elementary School and little children sometimes cross the road where there is no help.

A question was asked if there has been any action by the Sheriff's Office on the submission of photos of trucks illegally or legally parked temporarily on Bata Boulevard requiring cars to cross the double yellow line several times a day. Captain Swain replied that he had provided the pictures to the Safety Engineers in the Sheriff's Office and will follow up with them and get the status back to us. It was noted that the number of trucks parking temporarily on the street for 1-2 hours has been reduced a bit since the Chairman, BRCC, met with the Distribution Center Office Manager who agreed to address the safety issue with their own drivers. However, the Center cannot control the action of other drivers and so we still have the situation occurring several times a day. Also, this summer we did not have the problem with two and three trucks parked along Bata Boulevard with their engines running all night as in past years.

There was the usual discussion and frustration with the traffic situation in our community as well as the careless driving and speeding through intersections that seems to accompany too much traffic on roads not designed to support it.

A concern was raised about a homeless encampment in Riverside - Trillion Court and Foxglove. The Captain made a note to check on it.

An issue of bicyclists and motor scooter riders "rules of the road" was raised. Some ignore stop signs and lights, do not signal turns, and ride in the middle of the lane on roads without shoulders. Captain Swain will assure that we get an update and status of laws pertaining to these vehicles from our Sheriff's Office Representative at the next meeting.

Guest Presentations:

Paul Magness, with support from Arden McClune, gave an excellent presentation on Harford County Parks and Recreation as a part of the overall Land Preservation and Parks and Recreation plan that feeds into the overarching Land Use Plan for the county. Much of the funding for acquisition and development of open space in Harford County comes from the State grant program for open space. The requirement for use of these funds is that if open space is less than 30 acres per county resident than at least 50% of the annual funding from the state program must be used for the acquisition of land. When that goal is reached, more of the grant funding may be used for the development of parks and recreation facilities within the county. Funding is derived from Real Estate Transfer Tax and Recordation fees as well. In past years the funding has averaged \$4-5 Million whereas this year it has been reduced to \$800 Thousand.

Questions were raised regarding real estate developers who are supposed to set aside so many acres of land in new communities for open space. Are they permitted to reduce the amount of open space on their buildable land by paying the county an agreed-upon amount? And if so, does that funding go into the fund for county parks and facilities? In that situation, if there is a public park nearby, then the fee for reducing the planned open space on the buildable private land would be used for the public facilities for use by all citizens.

From 2005 to date, 383 acres have been purchased for county recreation, some of which have been developed. In answer to a question, the county sports facilities are managed through the Department of Parks and Recreation which gives Non-Profit 501C agencies permission to schedule sports programs using those facilities. The department is currently working to extend the Ma and Pa Trail from Williams Street in Bel Air to Forest Hill.

According to recent census, there is a 39% increase in the number of Harford County citizens ages 65 + and a 27% increase in those ages 40-64. The aging population which is much more active than in the past will impact the kinds of recreation planned as biking, walking and facility games such as pickle ball which is a slower version of tennis.

In regard to maintenance of public parks, a resident raised a concern about removal of a dead tree in the Longley Park on Long Bar Harbor. A note was made to check into it.

Janet Gleisner, Harford County Department of Planning and Zoning provided an extremely informative presentation on the Plans for Bike and Pedestrian Trails in Harford County. With the difficulty associated with widening roads throughout the county to accommodate increased traffic, other solutions must be pursued using a multi-modal approach including car pools, commuter trains, bikes and sidewalks for pedestrians. There is a tie-in in this program to the need to address the obesity problem in the county of which a factor is the more sedentary lifestyle when forced to drive

everywhere. A technical advisory committee has been formed with representatives from Department of Education, Parks and Recreation, Bicycle Clubs and Walkers to work on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

A public meeting was held in March to discuss the plan with 40 citizens attending. A list of comments received in 150 responses to a survey on the Need for Sidewalks and Crosswalks was provided to the board as well as a map showing the suggestions. One example of a suggestion she discussed was extending the bike trail in Riverside over the railroad tracks to Route 40 with a crosswalk to Bata Boulevard. Ms McClune assured the group that should the extension be approved, the trail would be maintained by the county in answer to a concern raised regarding an on-going graffiti problem in Riverside.

Steven Overbay, DoD BRAC Coordinator, provided a very informative presentation on the history and status of the BRAC impact on the transportation systems within Harford County. He discussed the major impact intersections and asked all to remember that normally transportation planning is accomplished on a 25-year plan and the decision to implement BRAC provided only 5 years to study, design, develop, and construct solutions. In addition, Federal funding has not been forthcoming beyond design and planning studies and the actual construction of the Rte 40/715 intersection. He discussed the many studies that have made the projects “shovel ready” and are awaiting funding. He provided the status of the current construction of the extra lanes on Routes 40 and 715. The traffic problems with this construction have not been as bad as anticipated due to timely and effective communication with the workforce and community; however, they may increase with the end of the summer vacation season and start-up of the school session.

It was pointed out that although BRAC is legally completed, future DoD projects assigned to current APG workforce will impact the expansion and contraction of Defense contractors and Federal organizations in the county. APG has established a shuttle service from the train stations into the two areas of APG: Aberdeen and Edgewood. They have an expansive commuter program designed to assist workers with rail, car pool, and bus service and flexible hours and work schedules have helped to ease the traffic congestion as well. Additional fiber access is providing Harford County with improved telework centers. Much is being accomplished through public/private partnerships such as the Beechtree Creek development partially funding additional lanes on Route 7.

For additional information on this topic, please visit the Chesapeake Science and Security Corridor website: www.apg-cssc.com or call 410-273-5708 to reach Mr. Overbay.

County Government: Maryland State Senator Nancy Jacobs discussed the special legislative session and the issues surrounding the impact of increasing the number of casinos within the state on the existing ones in Perryman and Arundel Mills Mall.

Chairman Carmichael thanked the presenters and all attendees for coming, and adjourned the meeting at 8: 32 pm.

Submitted by:

Mary Starks

Secretary, Bush River Community Council

